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Group rallies against alleged FBI burglaries, wiretapping, informants



Syd Stapleton

Photo by Dean Hanson

By LESA ALEXANDER

A "Rally Against FBI Crimes" held Thursday by the Minnesota Citizens' Review Commission concluded the FBI now must use different investigative tactics because the public will not tolerate illegal activities.

There were several nationally known speakers at the rally, including Syd Stapleton, Political Rights Defense Fund coordinator. The fund supports the four-year lawsuit by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) against the FBI and CIA.

As a result of the suit, illegal burglaries, wiretapping and use of informers by the FBI has been disclosed, according to Stapleton.

However, the FBI "still uses informers a great deal, burglarizes in total secrecy but has had to cut back on its use of wiretapping," Stapleton said in an earlier interview.

"The public has become very sensitive to wiretapping so the FBI has to be more cautious. You can't wiretap in complete secrecy because of notifying the telephone company, typing the transcript of where the conversation came from and more difficult

laws against wire tapping," Stapleton said.

The FBI has transferred some of its functions to local police forces known as "red squads," according to Stapleton. "Police forces can operate more secretly without the Justice Department and publicity."

Red squads are special police department divisions to maintain surveillance of political groups.

"There are two Twin Cities red squads, one in Minneapolis and one in Bloomington," Marv Davidov, Minnesota Citizens' Review Commission staff member, said.

Stapleton said: "Red squads historically have been the scum of the earth—vice squads in charge of roughing-up people."

SWP's \$37-million damage suit against the government continues to reveal FBI secrets by obtaining files through court orders.

"We received 200,000 pages of government documents of the eight million pages of files the FBI maintains on SWP members," Stapleton said. The files revealed the FBI "engaged in 92 burglaries of SWP head-

quarters between 1960-66."

The files were released after an omission of important information was discovered in an FBI agent's testimony. The trial judge said this "raised the possibility of wide-spread misrepresentations," in an Aug. 5, 1976, New York Times article.

The testimony did not reveal that an FBI informer, Timothy Redfearn, had obtained some material by burglarizing SWP offices in Denver.

There presently are two big issues in the suit, Stapleton said: The first issue is the public's right to information about FBI informers.

"The FBI does not want to reveal the identity of their informers because then they will be ineffective. We feel it's too bad because they are illegally used," Stapleton said.

The second issue is CIA's admission of the burglarizing and wiretapping of Americans living or traveling abroad.

"Our defenses are that Americans maintain their rights while overseas and that we are entitled to information about who is burglarized and why," Stapleton said.